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EDITORS, ACADEMY OF SCIENCES USSR, DISCUSS PUBLICATIONS

Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR, Vol 24, No 12
Moscow, Dec 1954

A meeting of the chief editors of the periodicals published by the Academy of Sciences USSR was held on 9 September 1954 in the Editorial-Publishing Council of the Academy of Sciences USSR. Academician T. V. Ostrovityanov, deputy chairman of the council, presented a report.

Ostrovityanov stated that the periodicals published by the Academy of Sciences USSR fulfill a very important function in the scientific research activities of the academy. The academy publishes 46 journals, in which the most prominent scientists of the USSR collaborate. The periodical publications of the academy receive the closest attention on the part of the Soviet community. They also have an extensive circulation abroad, particularly in the countries of the People's Democracies.

The basic tasks of the journals published by the academy are to contribute to the creative development of work on the principal problems of Soviet science, to aid in bringing about a close contact of science with practice, to expedite the introduction of the achievements of science into production, and to contribute to an increase of the role which science plays in the development of the people's economy and in the construction of Communist society. Many of the articles which are being published are of considerable theoretical value from a general standpoint and are also of great importance from the standpoint of practical economic and cultural progress.

The journals of the academy, particularly those which deal with various subdivisions of biological, chemical, physical, technical, and economic sciences, are called upon to illuminate systematically the most urgent scientific problems, the solution of which will contribute to a many-sided development of agriculture and light industry and will thus increase the consumption of goods by the people.

However, one must realize that the most important decisions of the party and of the government, particularly the decisions of the September 1953, February-March 1954, and June 1954 plenary sessions of the Central Committee of the CPSU, have not yet been fully reflected in the subject-matter published in the periodical journals issued by the academy.

The boards of editors of Botanicheskiy Zhurnal, Zoologicheskiy Zhurnal, and Biokhimiya have approached the task of helping agriculture with a due measure of responsibility. Other periodicals of the Department of Biological Sciences do not devote sufficient attention to the problems involved. The work of Fiziologicheskiy Zhurnal SSSR imeni I. M. Sechenova is not satisfactory in this respect. The journals Pochvovedeniye and Mikrobiologiya are carrying out their orientation toward urgent problems too slowly. The same reproach may be addressed to Izvestiya Akademii Nauk SSSR, Seriya Biologicheskaya as well as to the periodicals published by the Departments of Chemical, Technical, and Geographic Sciences.

Of the eight periodicals published by the departments of social sciences, only Voprosy Ekonomiki, Voprosy Filosofii, and Sovetskoye Gosudarstvo i Pravo have directly participated in the discussion of problems connected with the decisions of the plenary sessions of the Central Committee of the CPSU. However, on the whole, the discussion of these problems in the periodicals of the departments of social sciences cannot be considered adequate or satisfactory. The

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scientific level of the articles published is not high enough. The articles that have been published are of the propaganda type, and some of them advance erroneous postulates. Particularly strict standards must be demanded of the periodical Voprosy Ekonomiki. The Soviet community expects a scientific treatment of the problems of socialistic agriculture and socialistic industrial production from this periodical. This treatment must be based on a profound and many-sided generalization of the experience acquired in economic construction.

It is necessary to expand the information given in the academy journals concerning the most important problems of science and to publish scientific works which have a bearing on the practical building of Communism. One must raise the scientific level of the articles published and, in doing so, lend an active aid to practical work. This is the most important task of every periodical published by the academy.

It is recognized that no science can develop and prosper without conflicting opinions and freedom of criticism. An important task which must be accomplished by Soviet periodicals is the organization of constructive discussions on the leading problems of science, which must take the form of friendly criticism and self-criticism based on principle. Ostrovityanov emphasized in this connection that discussions may yield a positive result only when they are conducted on the basis of principle and are kept on a high scientific level.

Discussion must be a means of mutual help rendered by scientist to scientist in the solution of the most complex problems of science. It is of extreme importance to ensure that there be freedom of expressing contradictory opinions and to eliminate criticism of an insulting type, resorts to personal attacks, unfounded accusations, and the "attachment of labels" as well as other techniques or practices which are incompatible with a spirit of creative collaboration and mutual help in the solution of scientific problems.

At the same time, one must combat the worship of personalities and get rid of the monopolies in science which inevitably interfere with the development of creative ideas and prevent the detection and elimination of shortcomings that form obstacles to the advancement of science. For this reason, criticism in science must not bow to personalities, even though the personalities involved may be the most generally recognized and prominent scientists who head schools and trends in scientific research. Only when a free, businesslike, friendly discussion is possible can science forge ahead in the spirit of creative competition.

Recently, a certain change has become noticeable in the scientific discussions conducted by a number of the periodicals of the academy. For instance, in the periodical Voprosy Filosofii, discussions on problems of logic, psychology, esthetics, and the philosophy of natural science are being conducted from issue to issue. Both Soviet and foreign scientists participated in a discussion regarding the theory of relativity. Voprosy Ekonomiki has conducted a discussion on statistical problems and is continuing a discussion dealing with problems of special branches of economics.

Notwithstanding this, one may point out a considerable number of periodicals which avoid the free exchange of opinions in science. For instance, the pages of Prikladnaya Matematika i Mekhanika do not contain articles in which opinions are expressed that differ from the opinions held by the board of editors of this periodical. As a rule, problems which provoke discussion are also avoided by Uspekhi Khimii. This periodical has refused to publish a timely summary on the chemical effects of ultrasound submitted by Prof. B. B. Kudryavtsev, on the ground that this article may provoke discussion and is of a controversial type. Similar incidents have also occurred in connection with other periodicals published by the academy.

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A particularly objectionable situation arises when the participants in a discussion abandon the businesslike scientific approach and resort to personal attacks against each other, attacks which occasionally assume a very rude and impermissible form. A discussion of this type was conducted between Prof A. G. Ivanov-Smolenskiy, on the one side, and Prof P. K. Anokhin and E. A. Asratyan, Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences USSR, on the other side. This discussion was conducted in Zhurnal Vysshey Nervnoy Deyatel'nosti imeni I. P. Pavlova. Instances of the suppression of criticism occurred here. Thus, the article by Prof Ivanov-Smolenskiy appeared in the No 3, 1953 issue of this periodical, while the article by Prof Anokhin written in response was not published. Instances of an attitude towards individual authors which lacked objectivity and of an ill-founded refusal or delay in the publication of their articles also occurred in connection with other journals (Zhurnal Tekhnicheskoy Fiziki, Uspekhi Fizicheskikh Nauk, Fiziologicheskii Zhurnal SSSR imeni Sechenova, etc.). The boards of editors of these journals proved that they do not have the requisite high standing and do not exhibit a sufficient appreciation of the problems with which they were faced.

Scientific arguments in journals published by the academy often do not revolve around the basic problems of science, but deal with questions which are secondary. This criticism applies to such periodicals as Pochvovedeniye, Mikrobiologiya, Voprosy Istorii, and Izvestiya Akademii Nauk SSSR, Otdeleniye Literatury i Yazyka, as well as to others. An important shortcoming in the work of the last-mentioned periodical is the absence of discussion articles on urgent problems of the Soviet science of literature. The periodical Voprosy Yazykoznaniiya does not conduct creative discussions on the basic problems of the Soviet science of languages.

The material published in the course of discussions conducted by some journals (for instance, Izvestiya Akademii Nauk SSSR, Seriya Geologicheskaya, and Jovetskaya Etnografiya) is of a casual character. The boards of editors, after they have opened a discussion, do not direct it or summarize the results.

The journals of the academy should expand scientific discussions on the foremost problems of Soviet science and should endeavor to conduct these discussions on a high theoretical level, without indulging in personal bickering which is not worthy of Soviet scientists. The departments of reviews and bibliography of Soviet periodicals are destined to play an important role in the development of scientific criticism based on principle and in increasing its connection with practical work. Unfortunately, in many journals of the academy, such as Izvestiya Akademii Nauk SSSR, Seriya Biologicheskaya; Zhurnal Fizicheskoy Khimii, Zhurnal Obshchey Biologii, and Uspekhi Sovremennoy Biologii, the departments of reviews and bibliography do not occupy the place which they deserve.

In a scientific periodical, the review of a book must form a continuation of the scientific research discussed in the book that is being reviewed. Furthermore, the lines to be followed in subsequent study of the problem must be indicated, thus rendering aid to the author of the book in his new research. It is obvious that to accomplish this, the reviewer must have scientific qualifications which are no lower than those possessed by the author of the book. However, many of the reviews published in the journals of the academy do not satisfy these requirements, while the criticism itself is conducted with an eye on prominent personalities.

Some of the substantial shortcomings of the departments of reviews and bibliography are inadequate coverage of the current publications, haphazard selection of the works to be reviewed, and considerable delays in the publication of reviews. Particularly inadequate are the reviews of books published abroad. All

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this lowers the effectiveness of the critical and bibliographic material published in the journals and dulls the sharpness which releases directed against idealistic theories and bourgeois forgers of history must possess.

The example set by the board of editors of Voprosy Istorii, which before publication of a review calls an extensive meeting for the discussion of the book in which the author, the editors, and prominent specialists participate, should be imitated. Sometimes, accounts of these meetings are published. These accounts may completely replace competent reviews.

The journals of the academy do not give sufficient information on the development of science abroad. This applies to both the peoples' democracies and the capitalistic countries. The criticism of the work done by bourgeois scientists frequently still bears a superficial character, and it amounts to dogmatic statements only. It is necessary to raise the level of criticism and make it both adequately supported by the arguments presented and convincing. In addition, Soviet periodicals are called upon to inform Soviet scientists in regard to the achievements of science abroad.

Many academy journals in the fields of natural and social sciences must strengthen the scientific treatment of problems connected with the defeat of religious prejudices, in this way arming propagandists (agitators) with valuable material that will be of aid to them in conducting scientifically supported atheistic propaganda. The journals must take similar action in the struggle for improving the cultural conditions of labor and for making the life of the Soviet people more wholesome. In doing this, one must take into consideration the specific field of activity of every periodical and the possibilities which are open to it in this respect.

An increase in the scientific and organizational level of the academy journals cannot be achieved without unflagging attention to the principle of mutual solidarity as far as the activity of the boards of editors is concerned. Notwithstanding this, the boards of editors of some journals are completely inactive as directing bodies. In such cases, the functions of the board of editors are fulfilled by the editor and the responsible secretary. Sometimes, even the technical workers employed by the periodicals accept or reject contributed articles as they please. For example, the principle of mutual solidarity among those responsible for direction of the journal has been grossly violated by Zhurnal Vysshey Nervnoy Deyatel'nosti imeni I. P. Pavlova. The principle of mutual solidarity has also not been observed consistently by Zhurnal Eksperimental'noy i Tereticheskoy Fiziki, Izvestiya Akademii Nauk SSSR, Otdeleniye Technicheskikh Nauk, Avtomatika i Telemekhanika, Uspekhi Khimii, Zhurnal Analiticheskoy Khimii, and some others. In connection with a number of periodicals such as Kolloidnyy Zhurnal and Zhurnal Analiticheskoy Khimii, there has been unscheduled and uncontrolled publication of articles written by members of the editorial boards.

To observe in practice the principle of mutual solidarity, it is necessary to subject to scrutiny the boards of editors of some journals, to exclude from these boards persons who are inactive, to reinforce the boards by adding new and active workers, and to circumscribe precisely the duties which are to be carried out by individual members of the boards. It is necessary to increase the responsibility of the boards of editors for the quality of the periodicals and to achieve preliminary discussion of all articles which are important from the standpoint of principle.

To make it possible for academy journals to contribute actively to the fulfillment of major economic tasks in the building of Communism, it is necessary to give a more factual character to the subject matter of the articles that are published and to expand the amount of information given on the

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most important scientific problems. The journals are destined to play a very important role in the orientation being effected at present by the Academy of Sciences USSR and its departments and institutes toward these leading problems. The discussion and elucidation of the theoretical problems involved must receive the closest attention of every journal.

The active personnel of the journals must be expanded by obtaining the collaboration of scientific workers from the academies of the union republics and the higher educational institutions, of scientists from the People's Democracies, and of progressive workers of science from capitalistic countries. It is advisable periodically to conduct conferences in which the staffs of the journals and the authors and readers participate. In concluding his report, Ostrovityanov stated that the best-qualified scientists in the country participate in the editorial boards of the academy journals and that the most prominent scientists publish articles in them. He added that, under the circumstances, the academy journals ought to be capable of helping in the solution of the impressive problems set before science by the party and the government.

The questions raised in Ostrovityanov's report resulted in a lively exchange of opinions during the discussion which followed. Ostrovityanov's theses were expanded during the discussion. P. A. Belov, Doctor of Economic Sciences, stated in the course of the discussion that one of the major shortcomings of the periodical Voprosy Ekonomiki is the propaganda character of the articles on problems of agriculture and consumer goods published in it. The number of scientific investigations on these subjects published in the periodical is insignificant. Very little information on problems of political economy is given in journal. The board of editors proposes to publish a number of articles on the problems involved.

Academician V. N. Sukachev expressed some ideas in regard to the specialization of periodicals in the field of biology. D. G. Kvasov, Doctor of Medical Sciences, discussed the difficulties encountered by Fiziologicheskii Zhurnal SSSR imeni I. E. Sechenova and pointed out the shortcomings in the work of this journal particularly as far as the lack of contacts with scientific societies is concerned. S. N. Danilov, Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences USSR, called the attention of the participants at the meeting to the important problem of critical selection and careful editing of the texts to be published. This subject was also discussed by other participants. They emphasized that to improve the work of academy journals and to increase their role in the development of Soviet science, it is necessary to conduct more extensive discussions on the urgent problems faced by science and to ensure that these discussions be conducted on a high scientific level.

It is necessary to reinforce the criticism that is directed against the reactionary concepts of bourgeois scientists and to publish on a more extensive scale reviews and bibliographies which reflect the status and development of various branches of science in the People's Democracies as well as in capitalistic countries.

Academician A. M. Pankratova emphasized the undoubted value of the meeting conducted by the Editorial-Publishing Council and expressed the desire that such meetings be called regularly. The editors of journals also pointed out that it is desirable to conduct meetings devoted to individual fields of science such as social sciences, biological sciences, technical sciences, etc. At these meetings the planned work of journals will be discussed, the activities of journals will be coordinated and experience in organizational matters will be exchanged.

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The participants in the meeting passed a resolution in which actual measures aiming at the improvement of the activity of academy journals were outlined. The purpose of these measures will be to increase the role played by the periodicals in the development of Soviet science. The resolution emphasizes the necessity of publishing discussions in journals, of keeping these discussions on a high scientific level, and of excluding from them any elements of an unprincipled struggle between personalities. According to the resolution, the criticism of pseudoscientific theories current in capitalistic countries must be expanded, and the scientifically supported atheistic propaganda in popular scientific journals must be strengthened.

It is furthermore suggested to the boards of editors of periodicals that they expand the publication of the reviews and bibliographic information which reflect the status and development of the corresponding branches of science in the People's Democracies and capitalistic countries, and that they include among items of this type reports of Soviet scientists on international conferences and meetings which they have attended.

The best-qualified scientists must be induced to collaborate in reviews and bibliographic items. Such scientists are capable of giving a correct evaluation of the problems discussed and of indicating the lines along which solution of the problems must proceed. In this way, the authors of the publications reviewed will be aided in conducting further research.

The resolution goes on to say that more information must be given on the activities of the academies of sciences of union republics, the affiliates of the Academy of Science USSR, the central and peripheral higher educational institutions, and of other educational institutions. To achieve this, it is recommended that workers at these institutions and schools be induced to contribute articles for publication to an increasing extent.

The resolution also contains a number of proposals of an organizational nature. These proposals aim at a consistent application of the principle of mutual solidarity in the work of the boards of editors and also at ensuring that the periodicals will appear promptly at the scheduled time. It has been recognized that it is of value to conduct meetings of editors in individual fields of science in order that they may discuss their plans, coordinate their activities, and exchange experiences.

The resolution passed at the meeting has been confirmed by the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences USSR. The Presidium has suggested that the boards of editors take the resolution into consideration and outline practical measures which will improve the work of the journals.

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